



THE STATUES IN THE BLOCK.
AND OTHER POEMS

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY



PS2492
S17





7/1

Dr. F. Vercellhoft.

July 14th 1881.

THE
STATUES IN THE BLOCK,
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY
JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY. ✓

SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1881.

Copyright, 1881,
BY JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

37852

UNIVERSITY PRESS:
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

PS 2492

87

TO
THE MEMORY OF ELIZA BOYLE,
My Mother.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
THE STATUES IN THE BLOCK	9
THE FAME OF THE CITY	22
HEART-HUNGER	24
MULEY MALEK, THE KING	27
REMORSE	35
FROM THE EARTH, A CRY	37
PROMETHEUS — CHRIST	45
THE TEMPLE OF FRIENDSHIP	53
HER REFRAIN	60
A SAVAGE	62
LOVE'S SECRET	64
LOVE'S SACRIFICE	66
THE WELL'S SECRET	69
JACQUEMINOTS	72
LIVING	75
THE CELEBES	78
WAITING	80
WHEAT GRAINS	83
THE LURE	86
THE EMPTY NICHE	87
A SONG FOR THE SOLDIERS	91
THE MUTINY OF THE CHAINS	99

P O E M S.

*Life is a certainty,
Death is a doubt;
Men may be dead
While they're walking about.
Love is as needful
To being as breath;
Loving is dreaming, —
And waking is death.*

THE STATUES IN THE BLOCK.

“**L**OVE is the secret of the world,” he said ;
“The cup we drain and still desire to drink.
The loadstone hungers for the steel ; the steel,
Inert amid a million stones, responds to this.
So yearn and answer hearts that truly love :
Once touch their life-spring, it vibrates to death ;
And twain athrill as one are nature-wed.”

But silent stood the three who heard, nor smiled
Nor looked agreement. Strangers these who stood
Within a Roman studio — still young,
But sobered each with that which follows joy
At life's fresh forenoon, and the eye of each

Held deep within a restless eager light,
As gleams a diamond in a darkened room
With radiance hoarded from the vanished sun.

“The meteor-stone is dense and dark in space,
But bursts in flame when through the air it rushes ;
And our dull life is like an aerolite
That leaps to fire within the sphere of love.”
Unchecked his mood ran on : “ Sweet amorous hours
That lie in years as isles in tropic seas,
You spring to view as Art is born of Love,
And shape rich beauties in this marble block ! ”

Before them rose within the shaded light
A tall and shapely mass of Alp-white crystal
Fresh from the heart of a Carrara quarry.

“ Opaque to you this marble ; but to me,
Whose eyes the chrism of passion has anointed,
The stone is pregnant with a life of love.
Within this monolith there lives a form

Which I can see and would reveal to ^{*}you,
Could hand and chisel swiftly follow sight.
From brow to foot her lissome form stands forth —
The ripe lips smiling reached ; with nestling press,
As round the sailor frozen in the berg
The clear ice closes on the still dead face,
The marble, grown translucent, touches soft
Each comely feature — rippled hair, and chin,
And lily sweep of bust and hip and limb —
Ah, sweet mouth pouting for the lips that cling,
And white arms raised all quivering to the clasp —
Ah, rich throat made for burning lover's kiss,
And reckless bodice open to the swell,
And deep eyes soft with love's suffusion — Love !
O Love ! still living, memory and hope,
Beyond all sweets thy bosom, breath, and lips —
My jewel and the jewel of the world ! ”

They stood in silence, each one rapt and still,
As if the lovely form were theirs as his,

This golden medal's touch would still have power
To light the love-fire in the faded eyes
And swell the shrivelled breast to maiden roundness —
This thought I nursed — O Stygian abyss ! —
Away thy picture of the rippled hair !
Her hair was rippled and her eyes were deep,
Her breasts and limbs were white and lily-curved,
But all the woman, soul and wondrous flesh,
Was poison-steeped and veined with vicious fire ;
And I, blind fool who trusted, was but one
Who swooned with love beside her — But I drank
The wine she filled, and made her eat the dregs —
I drenched her honey with my sea of gall.
I see her in the marble where she shrinks
In shuddered fear, as if my face were fire —
Her cowering shadow making whiter still
The face of him that writhes beside her feet.
I see him breathe, the last deep breath, and turn
His eyes upon me horror-filled — his hand,
Still hot with wanton dalliance, clutched hard

Across the burning murder in his side —
And now he sinks still glaring — And my heart
Is there between them, petrified, O God !
And pierced by that red blow that struck their guilt.
O balm and torture ! he must hate who loves,
And bleed who strikes to see thy face, Revenge ! ”

Grown deep the silence for the words that died,
And paler still the marble for its grief.

“ Ah, myrrh and honey ! ” spake a third, whose eyes
Were deep with sorrow for the woe ; “ blind hands
That grope for flowers and pierce the flesh with thorns !
All love of woman still may turn to hate,
As wine to bitterness, as noon to night.
But sweeter far and deeper than the love
Of flesh for flesh, is the strong bond of hearts
For suffering Motherland — to make her free !
Love’s joy is short, and Hate’s black triumph bitter,
And loves and hates are selfish — save for thee,

O chained and weeping at thy pillar's foot,
Thy white flesh eaten by accurséd bands.
No love but thine can satisfy the heart,
For love of thee holds in it hate of wrong,
And shapes the hope that moulds humanity !
Not mine your passions, yet I weigh them well —
Who loves a greater sinks all lesser love,
Who hates a tyrant loses lesser hate.
My Land ! I see thee in the marble, bowed
Before thy tyrant, bound at foot and wrist —
Thy garments rent — thy wounded shoulder bare —
Thy chained hand raised to ward the cruel blow —
My poor love round thee scarf-like, weak to hide
And powerless to shield thee — but a boy
I wound it round thee, dearest, and a man
I drew it close and kissed thee — Mother, wife !
For thee the past and future days ; for thee
The will to trample wrong and strike for slaves ;
For thee the hope that ere mine arm be weak
And ere my heart be dry may close the strife

In which thy colors shall be borne through fire,
And all thy griefs washed out in manly blood —
And I shall see thee crowned and bound with love,
Thy strong sons round thee guarding thee. O star
That lightens desolation, o'er her beam,
Nor let the shadow of the pillar sink
Too deep within her, till the dawn is red
Of that white noon when men shall call her Queen ! ”

The deep voice quivering with affection ceased,
And silent each they saw within the stone
The captive nation and the mother's woe.
Yet while their hearts the fine emotion warmed,
Ere ebb'd the deep-pulsed throb of brotherhood,
The last one spoke, and held the wave at full : —

“ Yea, brothers, his the noblest for its grief ;
Your love was loss — but his was sacrifice.
Your light was sunlight, for the shallow sense,

That bends the eyes on earth and thinks it sees ;
His love was nightlike, when we see the stars,
Forgetting petty things around our feet.
Yet here, too, find his weakness, for his hope
Is still for sunlight, and your shallow sense,
And golden crowns and queendom for his love.
I, too, within the stone behold a statue,
Far less than yours, but greater, for I know
My symbol a beginning, not an end.
O, Grief, with Hope ! The marble fades — behold !
The little hands still crossed — a child in death.
My link with love — my dying gift from her
Whose last look smiled on both, when I was left
A loveless man, save this poor gift, alone.
My heart had wound its tendrils round one life,
But, when my joy was deepest, she was stricken,
And I was powerless to save. My prayers
And piteous cries were flung against my face —
My life was blighted by the curse of Heaven !
But from the depths her love returned to soothe :

Her dear hand reached from death and placed her
child

Where she had lived, within the riven tendrils,
And firmly these closed round their second treasure.
And she, my new love, in her infant hold
Took every heart-string as her mother's gift,
And touched such tender fine-strung chords, and
played

Such music in my heart as filled my life
With trembling joy and fondness for the child.
I feared to be so blest — her baby cheek,
When laid on mine, was Heaven's sweetest touch ;
And when she looked me in the eyes, I saw
Her mother look at me from deep within,
And bless me for the love I gave and won.
Yet, when I loved her most she, too, was doomed :
I saw it come upon her like a shadow,
And watched the change, appalled at first, but set
To ward the danger from my darling. She,
As day by day still failing, grew so tender

And crept so often to my heart, as if,
Though but a babe who could not speak a word,
She knew full well my life would soon be shattered.
But all my love was fruitless, and my prayers
To leave her with me beat the gates in vain.
I thought my love must hold her, till at last
I held the tiny body like a leaf
All day and night within my arms ; and so,
Close nestled to my yearning heart, Death passed,
As merciless as God, but left that look
Of two dead loves, as if Death's self knew pity.
And I was lost heart-withered in a night
That knew no star and held no ray of hope,
And heard no word but my despairing curse
With lifted hands, at life and Him who gave it !
My graves were all I had — the little mound
Where my hands laid her, with the sweet young
grass —
The tiny hill that grew until the sun
Was hid behind it, and I sat below

And gnawed my heart in grief within its shadow.
So one day bowed in woe beside the grave
The weight grew deadly, and I called aloud
That God should witness to my life in ruin.
And God's word reached me through the little grave
Where in the grass my face was buried weeping —
His peace came through it like a pent-up breath
That rolled from some great world whose gates had
 oped,
And blew upon my wild and hardened heart,
And swept my woe before it like a leaf.
My dried heart drank the meaning of the peace :
True love shall trust, and selfish love must die,
For trust is peace, and self is full of pain ;
Arise, and heal thy brother's grief ; his tears
Shall wash thy love and it will live again.
O little grave, I thought 't was love had died,
But in thy bosom only lies my sorrow.
I see my darling in the marble now —
My wasted leaf — her kind eyes smiling fondly,

And through her eyes I see the love beyond,
The biding light that moves not — and I know
That when God gives to us the clearest sight
He does not touch our eyes with Love, but Sorrow."

THE FAME OF THE CITY.

A GREAT rich city of power and pride,
With streets full of traders, and ships on the tide ;
With rich men and workmen and judges and preachers,
The shops full of skill and the schools full of teachers.

The people were proud of their opulent town :
The rich men spent millions to bring it renown ;
The strong men built and the tradesmen planned ;
The shipmen sailed to every land ;
The lawyers argued, the schoolmen taught,
And a poor shy Poet his verses brought,
And cast them into the splendid store.

The tradesmen stared at his useless craft ;
The rich men sneered and the strong men laughed ;

The preachers said it was worthless quite ;
The schoolmen claimed it was theirs to write ;
But the songs were spared, though they added nought
To the profit and praise the people sought,
That was wafted at last from distant climes ;
And the townsmen said : “ To remotest times
We shall send our name and our greatness down ! ”

The boast came true ; but the famous town
Had a lesson to learn when all was told :
The nations that honored cared nought for its gold,
Its skill they exceeded an hundred-fold ;
It had only been one of a thousand more,
Had the songs of the Poet been lost to its store.

Then the rich men and tradesmen and schoolmen said
They had never derided, but praised instead ;
And they boast of the Poet their town has bred.

HEART-HUNGER.

THERE is no truth in faces, save in children :
They laugh and frown and weep from nature's
keys ;

But we who meet the world give out false notes,
The true note dying muffled in the heart.

O, there be woful prayers and piteous wailing,
That spirits hear, from lives that starve for love !
The body's food is bread ; and wretches' cries
Are heard and answered : but the spirit's food
Is love ; and hearts that starve may die in agony
And no physician mark the cause of death.

You cannot read the faces ; they are masks, —
Like yonder woman, smiling at the lips,

Silk-clad, bejewelled, lapped with luxury,
And beautiful and young — ay, smiling at the lips,
But never in the eyes from inner light :
A gracious temple hung with flowers without —
Within, a naked corpse upon the stones !

O, years and years ago the hunger came —
The desert-thirst for love — she prayed for love —
She cried out in the night-time of her soul for love !
The cup they gave was poison whipped to froth.
For years she drank it, knowing it for death ;
She shrieked in soul against it, but must drink :
The skies were dumb — she dared not swoon or
scream.

As Indian mothers see babes die for food,
She watched dry-eyed beside her starving heart,
And only sobbed in secret for its gasps,
And only raved one wild hour when it died !

O Pain, have pity ! Numb her quivering sense ;
O Fame, bring guerdon ! Thrice a thousand years

Thy boy-thief with the fox beneath his cloak
Has let it gnaw his side unmoved, and held the world ;
And she, a slight woman, smiling at the lips,
With repartee and jest — a corpse-heart in her breast !

MULEY MALEK, THE KING.

THUNDER of guns, and cries — banners and
spears and blood !

Troops have died where they stood holding the
vantage points —

They have raced like waves at a wall, and dashed
themselves to death.

Dawn the fight begin, and noon was red with its noon.
The armies stretch afar — and the plain of Alcazar
Is drenched with Moorish blood.

On one side, Muley the King — Muley Malek the
Strong.

He had seized the Moorish crown because it would fit
his brows.

Hamet the Fair was king ; but Muley pulled him
down, because he was strong.

The fierce sun glares on the clouds of dust and battle
smoke,

The hoarsened soldiers choke in the blinding heat.

Muley the King is afield, but sick to the death.

Borne on a litter he lies, his blood on fire, his eyes

Flaming with fever light.

Hamah Tabah the Captain, stands by the curtained bed,

Telling him news of the fight — how the waves roll and
rise, and clash and mingle and seethe.

And Hamah bends to the scene. He peers under
archéd hand —

As an eagle he stoops to the field. One hand on the hilt
Is white at the knuckles, so fiercely gripped ; while
the hand

That had parted the curtains before now clutches the
silk and wrings.

Hamet's squadrons are moving in mass — their lines
are circling the plain !

The thousands of Muley stand, like bison dazed by
an earthquake ;

They are stunned by the thud of the fight, they are
deer without a leader ;

Their charge has died like the impulse of missiles freed
from the sling ;

Their spears waver like shaken barley, — they are
dumb-struck and ready to fly !

Hamah Tabah the Captain, in words like the pouring
of pitch, has painted

The terrible scene for the sick King, and terrible
answer follows.

Up from the couch of pain, disdaining the bonds of
weakness ;

Flinging aside disease as a wrestler flings his tunic ;

Strong with the smothered fire of fever, and fiercer
far than its flaming,

Rises in mail from the litter Muley Malek the King !

Down on his plunging stallion, in the eyes of the shud-
dered troops,

His bent plume like a smoke, and his sword like a flame,

Smelting their souls with his courage, he rides before
his soldiers !

They bend from his face like the sun — their eyes are
blind with shame —

They thrill as a stricken tiger thrills, gathering his limbs
from a blow ;

They raise their faces, and watch him, sworded and
mailed and strong ;

They watch him, and shout his name fiercely — “ *Mu-
ley, the King !* ”

Grimly they close their ranks, drinking his face like
wine ;

Strength to the arm and wrath to the soul, and power —
Fuel and fire he was — and the battle roared like a
crater !

Back to the litter, his face turned from the lines, and
fixed

In a stare like the faces in granite, the King

Rode straight and strong, holding his sword
Soldierly, gripped on the thigh, grim as a king in iron !

Stiff in the saddle, stark, frowning — one hand is raised,
The mailed finger is laid on the mouth :

“ *Silence !* ” the warning said to Hamah Tabah the
Captain.

Help from his horse they give, moving him, still un-
bending,

Down to the bed, and lay him within the curtains.

Mutely they answer his frown, like ridges of bronze,
and sternly

Again is the mailed hand raised and laid on the lips
in warning :

“ *Silence !* ” it said, and the meaning smote through
their blood like flame,

As the tremor passed through his armor and the gray-
ness crept o’er his features —

Muley the King was dead !

Furious the struggle and long, the armies with teeth
aclench

And dripping weapons shortened, like athletes whose
blows have killed pain.

The soldiers of Hamet were flushed — but the spirit of
Muley opposed them ;

The weak of Muley grew strong when they looked at
the curtained litter.

Their thought of the King was wine in the thirst of
the fight ;

They saw that Hamah was there, still bending over the
bed ;

Holding the curtains wide and taking the order that
came

From the burning lips of the King, and sending it
down to his soldiers ;

They knew that Hamah the Captain was telling him
of the onset,

How they swept like hail on the fields, and left them
like sickled grain.

Back, as the waves in a tempest are flung from a cliff
and scattered,
Burst and horribly broken and driven beneath with
the impact,
Shivered, for once and forever, the conquered forces ;
King Hamet
Was slain by the sword, and the foreign monarch who
helped him,
And the plain was swept by the besom of death :
There never was grander faith in a king !

Trophies and victors' crowns, bring them to bind his
brow !
Circle his curtained bed — thousands and thousands,
come !
It will cure him, and kill his pain — we must see him
to-night again :
One glance of his love and pride for all the hosts that
died —
To his bedside — come !

Rigid, with frowning brow, his finger laid on his lips,
They saw him — saw him and knew, and read the
word that he spake,
Stronger than death, and they stood in their tears,
and were silent,
Obeying the King !

REMORSE.

I REMEMBER when I was a boy
That a grown girl wanted to kiss me ;
And I struggled, was angry, and shy,
And ran off when she tried to caress me.

And I've thought of that day through the years ;
(What a moral, my friend, lies in this !)
Under every sweet leaf that appears
Lurks a pain for the loss of that kiss.

The Infinite always is silent ;

It is only the Finite speaks.

Our words are the idle wave-caps

On the deep that never breaks.

We may question with wand of science,

Explain, decide, and discuss ;

But only in meditation

The Mystery speaks to us.

FROM THE EARTH, A CRY.

"The Years of Our Lord" 1870 to 1880. — The Rulers of Prussia and France make War. — The Paris Commune. — War for Rome between the Pope and the King of Italy. — War between Russia and Turkey. — England devastates Abyssinia, Ashantee, and Zululand. — One English Viceroy in India murdered. Another shot at. — Socialists attempt to kill the Emperor of Germany. — Internationalists fire at the King of Italy. — Nihilists thrice attempt to destroy the Czar. — The Mines of Siberia filled with Political Prisoners. — The Farmers of Ireland rebel in Despair against Rack-rents. — The Workmen of England emigrating from Starvation. — The Land of England, Scotland, and Ireland held by less than a Quarter of a Million of Men. — The Pittsburg Riots. — The American Strikes. — The End of the Decade.

CAN the earth have a voice? Can the clods have
speech,

To murmur and rail at the demigods?

Trample them ! Grind their vulgar faces in the clay !

The earth was made for lords and the makers of law ;

For the conquerors and the social priests ;

For traders who feed on and foster the complex
life ;

For the shrewd and the selfish who plan and keep ;

For the heirs who squander the hoard that bears

The face of the king, and the blood of the serf,

And the curse of the darkened souls !

O Christ ! and O Christ ! In thy name the law !

In thy mouth the mandate ! In thy loving hand the
whip !

They have taken thee down from thy cross and sent
thee to scourge the people ;

They have shod thy feet with spikes and jointed thy
dead knees with iron,

And pushed thee, hiding behind, to trample the poor
dumb faces !

The spheres make music in space. They swing

Like fiery cherubim on their paths, circling their
suns,

Mysterious, weaving the irrevealable,
Full of the peace of unity — sphere and its life at
one —
Humming their lives of love through the limitless waste
of creation.

God ! thou hast made man a test of Thyself !
Thou hast set in him a heart that bleeds at the cry of
the helpless :

Through Thine infinite seas one world rolls silent,
Moaning at times with quivers and fissures of blood ;
Divided, unhappy, accursèd ; the lower life good,
But the higher life wasted and split, like grain with a
cankered root.

Is there health in thy gift of life, Almighty ?
Is there grief or compassion anywhere for the poor ?
If these be, there is guerdon for those who hate the
wrong

And leap naked on the spears, that blood may cry
For truth to come, and pity, and Thy peace.

The human sea is frozen like a swamp ; and the kings
And the heirs and the owners ride on the ice and
 laugh.

Their war-forces, orders, and laws are the crusted field
 of a crater,
And they stamp on the fearful rind, deriding its flesh-
 like shudder.

Lightning ! the air is split, the crater bursts, and the
 breathing

Of those below is the fume and fire of hatred.

The thrones are stayed with the courage of shotted
 guns. The warning dies.

But queens are dragged to the block, and the knife of
 the guillotine sinks

In the garbage of pampered flesh that gluts its bed and
 its hinges.

Silence again, and sunshine. The gaping lips are
 closed on the crater.

The dead are below, and the landless, and those who
live to labor

And grind forever in gloom that the privileged few
may live.

But the silence is sullen, not restful. It heaves like a
sea, and frets,

And beats at the roof till it finds another vent for its
fury.

Again the valve is burst and the pitch-cloud rushes, —
the old seam rends anew —

Where the kings were killed before, their names are
hewed from the granite —

Paris, mad hope of the slave-shops, flames to the
petroleuse !

Tiger that tasted blood — Paris that tasted freedom !

Never, while steel is cheap and sharp, shall thy king-
lings sleep without dreaming —

Never, while souls have flame, shall their palaces
crush the hovels.

Insects and vermin, ye, the starving and dangerous
 myriads,

List to the murmur that grows and growls ! Come
 from your mines and mills,

Pale-faced girls and women with ragged and hard-eyed
 children,

Pour from your dens of toil and filth, out to the air of
 heaven —

Breathe it deep, and hearken ! A Cry from the cloud
 or beyond it,

A Cry to the toilers to rise, to be high as the highest
 that rules them,

To own the earth in their lifetime and hand it down
 to their children !

Emperors, stand to the bar ! Chancellors, halt at the
 barracks !

Landlords and Lawlords and Tradelords, the spectres
 you conjured have risen —

Communists, Socialists, Nihilists, Rent-rebels, Strikers,
behold !

They are fruit of the seed you have sown — God has
prospered your planting. They come
From the earth, like the army of death. You have
sowed the teeth of the dragon !

Hark to the bay of the leader ! You shall hear the
roar of the pack

As sure as the stream goes seaward. The crust on
the crater beneath you

Shall crack and crumble and sink, with your laws and
rules

That breed the million to toil for the luxury of the
ten —

That grind the rent from the tiller's blood for drones
to spend —

That hold the teeming planet as a garden plot for a
thousand —

That draw the crowds to the cities from the healthful
fields and woods —

That copulate with greed and beget disease and
crime —

That join these two and their offspring, till the world
is filled with fear,

And falsehood wins from truth, and the vile and cunning
succeed,

And manhood and love are dwarfed, and virtue and
friendship sick,

And the law of Christ is a cloak for the corpse that
stands for Justice !

— As sure as the Spirit of God is Truth, this Truth
shall reign,

And the trees and lowly brutes shall cease to be higher
than men.

God purifies slowly by peace, but urgently by fire.

PROMETHEUS — CHRIST.

LASHED to the planet, glaring at the sky,
An eagle at his heart — the Pagan Christ !

Why is it, Mystery? O, dumb Darkness, why
Have always men, with loving hearts themselves,
Made devils of their gods ?

The whirling globe
Bears round man's sweating agony of blood,
That Might may gloat above impotent Pain !

Man's soul is dual — he is half a fiend,
And from himself he typifies Almighty.

O, poison-doubt, the answer holds no peace :
Man did not make himself a fiend, but God.

Between them, what? Prometheus stares
Through ether to the lurid eyes of Jove —
Between them, Darkness !

But the gods are dead —

Ay, Zeus is dead, and all the gods but Doubt,
And Doubt is brother devil to Despair !

What, then, for us? Better Prometheus' fate,
Who dared the gods, than insect unbelief —
Better Doubt's fitful flame than abject nothingness !

O, world around us, glory of the spheres !
God speaks in ordered harmony — behold !
Between us and the Darkness, clad in light, —
Between us and the curtain of the Vast, — two Forms,
And each is crowned eternally — and One

Is crowned with flowers and tender leaves and grass,
And smiles benignly ; and the other One,
With sadly pitying eyes, is crowned with thorns :
O Nature, and O Christ, for men to love
And seek and live by — Thine the dual reign —
The health and hope and happiness of men !

Behold our faith and fruit ! ——

What demon laughs ?

Behold our books, our schools, our states,
Where Christ and Nature are the daily word ;
Behold our dealings between man and man,
Our laws for home, our treaties for abroad ;
Behold our honor, honesty, and freedom,
And, last, our brotherhood ! For we are born
In Christian times and ruled by Christian rules !

Bah ! God is mild, or he would strike the world
As men should smite a liar on the mouth.

Shame on the falsehood ! Let us tell the truth —
Nor Christ nor Nature rules, but Greed and Creed
And Caste and Cant and Craft and Ignorance.
Down to the dust with every decent face,
And whisper there the lies we daily live.
O, God forgive us ! Nature never can ;
For one is merciful, the other just.

Let us confess : by Nations first — our lines
Are writ in blood and rapine and revenge ;
Conquest and pride have motive been and law —
Christ walks with us to hourly crucifixion !

As Men ? Would God the better tale were here :
Atom as whole, corruption, shrewdness, self.

Freedom ? A juggle — hundreds slave for one, —
That one is free, and boasts, and lo ! the shame,
The hundreds at the wheel go boasting too.

Justice ? The selfish only can succeed ;
Success means power — did Christ mean it so ? —

And power must be guarded by the law,
And preachers preach that law must be obeyed,
Ay, even when Right is ironed in the dock,
And Rapine sits in ermine on the bench !
Mercy? Behold it in the reeking slums
That grow like cancers from the palace wall ;
Go hear it from the conquered — how their blood
Is weighed in drops, and purchased, blood for gold ;
Go ask the toiling tenant why he paid
The landlord's rent and let his children starve ;
Go find the thief, whose father was a thief,
And ask what Christian leech has cured his sin ?
Honesty? Our law of life is Gain —
We must get gold or be accounted fools ;
The lovable, the generous, must be crushed
And substituted by the hard and shrewd.

What is it, Christ, this thing called Christian life,
Where Christ is not, where ninety slave for ten,
And never own a flower save when they steal it,

And never hear a bird save when they cage it?
Is this the freedom of Thy truth? Ah, woe
For those who see a higher, nobler law
Than his, the Crucified, if this be so !

O, man's blind hope — Prometheus, thine the gift —
That bids him live when reason bids him die !
We cling to this, as sailors to a spar —
We see that this is 'Truth : that men are one,
Nor king nor slave among them save by law ;
We see that law is crime, save God's sweet code
That laps the world in freedom : trees and men
And every life around us, days and seasons,
All for their natural order on the planet,
To live their lives, an hour, a hundred years,
Equal, content, and free — nor curse their souls
With trade's malign unrest, with books that breed
Disparity, contempt for those who cannot read ;
With cities full of toil and sin and sorrow,
Climbing the devil-built hill called Progress !

Prometheus, we reject thy gifts for Christ's !
Selfish and hard were thine ; but His are sweet —
“ Sell what thou hast and give it to the poor ! ”
Him we must follow to the great Commune,
Reading his book of Nature, growing wise
As planet-men, who own the earth, and pass ;
Him we must follow till foul Cant and Caste
Die like disease, and Mankind, freed at last,
Tramples the complex life and laws and limits
That stand between all living things and Freedom !

“ You gave me the key of your heart, my love ;

Then why do you make me knock ? ”

“ O, that was yesterday, Saints above !

And last night — I changed the lock ! ”

THE TEMPLE OF FRIENDSHIP.

IN the depths of the silent wood the temple of
Friendship stood,
Like a dream of snow-white stone, or a vestal all alone,
Undraped beside a stream.

The pious from every clime came there to rest for a
time,
With incense and gifts and prayer; and the stainless
marble stair
Was worn by fervent knees.

And everywhere the fame of the beautiful temple came,
With its altar white and pure, and its worship to allure
From gods that bring unrest.

The goddess was there to assuage (for this was the
Golden Age)

The trials of all who staid and trustingly tried and
prayed

For the perfect grace.

Soldier and clerk and dame in couples and companies
came ;

There were few who rode alone, for none feared the
other one,

So placid and safe the creed.

There came from afar one day, with a suite in rich
array,

A lady of beauty rare, who bent to the plaintive air

A handsome minstrel sung.

Her face was as calm and cold as the stamp of a queen
on gold,

And the song the poet sung to a restful theme was
strung,

A tranquil air of peace.

But, as they happily rode to the holy and white abode,
They were watched from a cloud above by the mis-
chievous god of Love,
Who envied Friendship's reign.

They dreamt not of danger near, and their hearts felt
no shade of fear,
As they laid their rich offerings of flowers and precious
things
At Friendship's lovely feet.

They lingered long near the shrine, in the air of its
peace divine ;
By the shadowed stream they strayed, where often the
heavenly maid
Would smile upon their rest.

One day, with her white robe flown, she passed like a
dream alone,
Where they sat in a converse sweet, with the silver
stream at their feet
As still and as wise as they.

To the innermost temple's room, to the couch, and the
sacred loom

Where she weaves her placid will, the goddess came,
smiling still,

Unrobing for blissful rest.

[old,

O lily of perfect mould, the world had grown young, not
Had it bowed at thy milk-white feet with a love not
of fire, but heat, —

Sweet lotus of soft repose !

Like the moon her body glows, like the sun-flushed
Alpine snows ;

Her arms 'neath her radiant head, she sleeps, and lo !
o'er her bed

The wicked Cupid leans.

Even he cannot fly the feast which nor vestal nor
hoary priest

Had ever enjoyed before. But, stealing her robe from
the floor,

He dons it and is gone.

By the stream, in the silent shade, he walks where
the two have made
Their resting-place for the noon : “ ’T is Friendship ! ”
they cry ; and soon
Love’s guile on their hearts is laid.

“ O, the goddess is good ! ” she said, as she bent her
golden head
And looked in the minstrel’s face. “ She stands by
our resting-place
And blesses our peaceful love ! ”

As she spoke, a flame shot through her breast, and her
eyes of blue
Grew moist with a subtle bliss. “ Sweet friend ! ” she
cried, and her kiss
Clung soft on the poet’s lips.

“ Ah, me ! ” he sighed, “ if they knew, those feverish
lovers who woo

For the passion of tears and blood, how soothing and
pure and good
Is a friendly kiss — like this !”

“O, list !” she cried, “’t is a dove ; he calls for his
absent love ;
They will sit all day and coo calm friendship, like
mine for you, —
Dear friend, like mine for you !”

Their hands were joined, and a thrill of desire and
passionate will
Brought his eyes her eyes above in a marvellous look
of love,
And Cupid smiled and drew near.

“O sweetest !” she whispered softly. “See ! the goddess is leaning over me,
And smiling with eyes like yours ! O Goddess ! thy
presence cures
The restful unrest of friends !”

And Cupid laughed in her eyes as he threw off the
white disguise

And bent down to kiss her himself — but cuff ! cuff !
on the ears of the elf

From the goddess who sought her robe.

And the river flowed on through the wood, and the
temple of Friendship stood

Like a dream of snow-white stone. But the minstrel
returned alone

From his pilgrimage.

HER REFRAIN.

“**D**O you love me?” she said, when the skies were
blue,

And we walked where the stream through the
branches glistened ;

And I told and retold her my love was true,

While she listened and smiled, and smiled and
listened.

“Do you love me?” she whispered, when days were
drear,

And her eyes searched mine with a patient yearning ;
And I kissed her, renewing the words so dear,

While she listened and smiled, as if slowly learning.

“Do you love me?” she asked, when we sat at rest
By the stream enshadowed with autumn glory ;
Her cheek had been laid as in peace on my breast,
But she raised it to ask for the sweet old story.

And I said : “I will tell her the tale again —

I will swear by the earth and the stars above me !”

And I told her that uttermost time should prove

The fervor and faith of my perfect love ;

And I vowed it and pledged it that nought should
move ;

While she listened and smiled in my face, and then

She whispered once more, “Do you truly love
me?”

A SAVAGE.

DIXON, a Choctaw, twenty years of age,
Had killed a miner in a Leadville brawl ;
Tried and condemned, the rough-beards curb their
rage,
And watch him stride in freedom from the hall.

“ Return on Friday, to be shot to death ! ”

So ran the sentence — it was Monday night.
The dead man’s comrades drew a well-pleased breath ;
Then all night long the gambling dens were bright.

The days sped slowly ; but the Friday came,
And flocked the miners to the shooting-ground ;
They chose six riflemen of deadly aim,
And with low voices sat and lounged around.

“He will not come.” “He’s not a fool.” “The men
Who set the savage free must face the blame.”

A Choctaw brave smiled bitterly, and then
Smiled proudly, with raised head, as Dixon came.

Silent and stern — a woman at his heels ;

He motions to the brave, who stays her tread.
Next minute — flame the guns : the woman reels
And drops without a moan — Dixon is dead.

LOVE'S SECRET.

LOVE found them sitting in a woodland place,
His amorous hand amid her golden tresses ;
And Love looked smiling on her glowing face
And moistened eyes upturned to his caresses.

“ O sweet,” she murmured, “ life is utter bliss ! ”

“ Dear heart,” he said, “ our golden cup runs over ! ”

“ Drink, love,” she cried, “ and thank the gods for this ! ”

He drained the precious lips of cup and lover.

Love blessed the kiss ; but, ere he wandered thence,

The mated bosoms heard this benediction :

“ *Love lies within the brimming bowl of sense :*

Who keeps this full has joy — who drains, affliction. ”

They heard the rustle as he smiling fled :

She reached her hand to pull the roses blowing.

He stretched to take the purple grapes o'erhead ;

Love whispered back, "*Nay, keep their beauties growing.*"

They paused, and understood : one flower alone

They took and kept, and Love flew smiling over.

Their roses bloomed, their cup went brimming on —

She looked for Love within, and found her lover.

LOVE'S SACRIFICE.

LOVE'S Herald flew o'er all the fields of Greece,
Crying : " Love's altar waits for sacrifice ! "

And all folk answered, like a wave of peace,
With treasured offerings and gifts of price.

Toward high Olympus every white road filled
With pilgrims streaming to the blest abode ;
Each bore rich tribute, some for joys fulfilled,
And some for blisses lingering on the road.

The pious peasant drives his laden car ;
The fisher youth bears treasure from the sea ;
A wife brings honey for the sweets that are ;
A maid brings roses for the sweets to be.

Here strides the soldier with his wreathèd sword,
No more to glitter in his country's wars ;

There walks the poet with his mystic word,
And smiles at Eros' mild recruit from Mars.

But midst these bearers of propitious gifts,
Behold where two, a youth and maiden, stand :
She bears no boon ; his arm no burden lifts,
Save her dear fingers pressed within his hand.

Their touch ignites the soft delicious fire,
Whose rays the very altar-flames eclipse ;
Their eyes are on each other — sweet desire
And yearning passion tremble on their lips.

So fair — so strong ! Ah, Love ! what errant wiles
Have brought these two so poor and so unblest ?
But see ! Instead of anger, Cupid smiles ;
And lo ! he crowns their sacrifice as best !

Their hands are empty, but their hearts are filled ;
Their gifts so rare for all the host suffice :
Before the altar is their life-wine spilled —
The love they long for is their sacrifice.

*A man will trust another man, and show
His secret thought and act, as if he must;
A woman — does she tell her sins? Ah, no!
She never knew a woman she could trust.*

THE WELL'S SECRET.

I KNEW it all my boyhood : in a lonesome valley
meadow,

Like a dryad's mirror hidden by the wood's dim
arches near ;

Its eye flashed back the sunshine, and grew dark and
sad with shadow ;

And I loved its truthful depths where every pebble
lay so clear.

I scooped my hand and drank it, and watched the
sensate quiver

Of the rippling rings of silver as the beads of crystal
fell ;

I pressed the richer grasses from its little trickling river,
Till at last I knew, as friends know, every secret of
the well.

But one day I stood beside it on a sudden, unexpected,
When the sun had crossed the valley and a shadow
hid the place ;
And I looked in the dark water — saw my pallid cheek
reflected —
And beside it, looking upward, met an evil reptile
face :

Looking upward, furtive, startled at the silent, swift
intrusion ;
Then it darted toward the grasses, and I saw not
where it fled ;
But I knew its eyes were on me, and the old-time
sweet illusion
Of the pure and perfect symbol I had cherished
there was dead.

O, the pain to know the perjury of seeming truth that
blesses !

My soul was seared like sin to see the falsehood of
the place ;

And the innocence that mocked me, while in dim un-
seen recesses

There were lurking fouler secrets than the furtive
reptile face.

And since then,—O, why the burden?—when the
joyous faces greet me,

With their eyes of limpid innocence, and words
devoid of art,

I cannot trust their seeming, but must ask what eyes
would meet me

Could I look in sudden silence at the secrets of
the heart !

JACQUEMINOTS.

I MAY not speak in words, dear, but let my words
be flowers,

To tell their crimson secret in leaves of fragrant fire ;
They plead for smiles and kisses as summer fields for
showers,

And every purple veinlet thrills with exquisite desire.

O, let me see the glance, dear, the gleam of soft con-
fession

You give my amorous roses for the tender hope they
prove ;

And press their heart-leaves back, love, to drink their
deeper passion,

For their sweetest, wildest perfume is the whisper of
my love !

My roses, tell her, pleading, all the fondness and the
sighing,

All the longing of a heart that reaches thirsting for
its bliss ;

And tell her, tell her, roses, that my lips and eyes are
dying

For the melting of her love-look and the rapture of
her kiss.

Hunger goes sleeplessly
Thinking of food ;
Evil lies painfully
Yearning for good.
Life is a confluence :
Nature must move,
Like the heart of a poet,
Toward beauty and love.

LIVING.

TO toil all day and lie worn-out at night ;
To rise for all the years to slave and sleep,
And breed new broods to do no other thing
In toiling, bearing, breeding — life is this
To myriad men, too base for man or brute.

To serve for common duty, while the brain
Is hot with high desire to be distinct ;
To fill the sand-grain place among the stones
That build the social wall in million sameness,
Is life by leave, and death by insignificance.

To live the morbid years, with dripping blood
Of sacrificial labor for a Thought ;
To take the dearest hope and lay it down
Beneath the crushing wheels for love of Freedom ;

To bear the sordid jeers of cant and trade,
And go on hewing for a far ideal, —
This were a life worth giving to a cause,
If cause be found so worth a martyr life.

But highest life of man, nor work nor sacrifice,
But utter seeing of the things that be !
To pass amid the hurrying crowds, and watch
The hungry race for things of vulgar use ;
To mark the growth of baser lines in men ;
To note the bending to a servile rule ;
To know the natural discord called disease
That rots like rust the blood and souls of men ;
To test the wisdoms and philosophies by touch
Of that which is immutable, being clear,
The beam God opens to the poet's brain ;
To see with eyes of pity laboring souls
Strive upward to the Freedom and the Truth,
And still be backward dragged by fear and ignorance ;

To see the beauty of the world, and hear
The rising harmony of growth, whose shade
Of undertone is harmonized decay ;
To know that love is life — that blood is one
And rushes to the union — that the heart
Is like a cup athirst for wine of love ;
Who sees and feels this meaning utterly,
The wrong of law, the right of man, the natural truth,
Partaking not of selfish aims, withholding not
The word that strengthens and the hand that helps ; .
Who waits and sympathizes with the pettiest life,
And loves all things, and reaches up to God
With thanks and blessing — he alone is living.

THE CELEBES.

“The sons of God came upon the earth and took wives of the daughters of men.” — *Legends of the Talmud.*

DEAR islands of the Orient,
Where Nature's first of love was spent ;
Sweet hill-tops of the summered land
Where gods and men went hand in hand
In golden days of sinless earth !
Woe rack the womb of time, that bore
The primal evil to its birth !
It came ; the gods were seen no more :
The fields made sacred by their feet,
The flowers they loved, grown all too sweet,
The streams their bright forms mirrorèd,
The fragrant banks that made their bed,

The human hearts round which they wove
Their threads of superhuman love —
These were too dear and desolate
To sink to fallen man's estate ;
The gods who loved them loosed the seas,
Struck free the barriers of the deep,
That rolled in one careering sweep
And filled the land, as 't were a grave,
And left no beauteous remnant, save
Those hill-tops called the Celebes.

WAITING.

HE is coming ! he is coming ! in my throbbing
breast I feel it ;

There is music in my blood, and it whispers all day long,
That my love unknown^{*} comes toward me ! Ah, my heart,
he need not steal it,

For I cannot hide the secret that it murmurs in its song !

O the sweet bursting flowers ! how they open, never
blushing,

Laying bare their fragrant bosoms to the kisses of the
sun !

And the birds — I thought 't was poets only read their
tender gushing,

But I hear their pleading stories, and I know them every
one.

“ He is coming ! ” says my heart ; I may raise my eyes
and greet him ;

I may meet him any moment — shall I know him
when I see ?

And my heart laughs back the answer — I can tell
him when I meet him,

For our eyes will kiss and mingle ere he speaks a
word to me.

O, I ’m longing for his coming — in the dark my arms
outreaching ;

To hasten you, my love, see, I lay my bosom bare !
Ah, the night-wind ! I shudder, and my hands are
raised beseeching —

It wailed so light a death-sigh that passed me in
the air !

*O, the rare spring flowers! take them as they come :
Do not wait for summer buds — they may never bloom.
Every sweet to-day sends we are wise to save ;
Roses bloom for pulling: the path is to the grave.*

WHEAT GRAINS.

AS grains from chaff, I sift these worldly rules,
Kernels of wisdom, from the husks of schools :

I.

Benevolence befits the wisest mind ;
But he who has not studied to be kind,
Who grants for asking, gives without a rule,
Hurts whom he helps, and proves himself a fool.

II.

The wise man is sincere : but he who tries
To be sincere, hap-hazard, is not wise.

III.

Knowledge is gold to him who can discern
That he who loves to know, must love to learn.

IV.

Straightforward speech is very certain good ;
But he who has not learned its rule is rude.

V.

Boldness and firmness, these are virtues each,
Noble in action, excellent in speech.
But who is bold, without considerate skill,
Rashly rebels, and has no law but will ;
While he called firm, illiterate and crass,
With mulish stubbornness obstructs the pass.

VI.

The mean of soul are sure their faults to gloss,
And find a secret gain in others' loss.

VII.

Applause the bold man wins, respect the grave ;
Some, only being *not* modest, think they 're brave.

VIII.

The petty wrong-doer may escape unseen ;
But what from sight the moon eclipsed shall screen ?
Superior minds must err in sight of men,
Their eclipse o'er, they rule the world again.

IX.

Temptation waits for all, and ills will come ;
But some go out and ask the devil home.

X.

“ I love God,” said the saint. God spake above :
“ Who loveth me must love those whom I love.”
“ I scourge myself,” the hermit cried. God spake :
“ Kindness is prayer ; but not a self-made ache.”

THE LURE.

“**W**HAT bait do you use,” said a Saint to the
Devil,

“When you fish where the souls of men abound?”

“Well, for special tastes,” said the King of Evil,

“Gold and Fame are the best I’ve found.”

“But for general use?” asked the Saint. “Ah, then,”

Said the Demon, “I angle for Man, not men,

And a thing I hate

Is to change my bait,

So I fish with a woman the whole year round.”

THE EMPTY NICHE.

Read at the farewell reception given to Rev. Robert Fulton, S. J.,
at Boston College Hall, Feb. 5, 1880.

A KING once made a gallery of art,
With portraits of dead friends and living graced ;
And at the end, 'neath curtains drawn apart,
An empty marble pedestal was placed.

Here, every day, the king would come, and pace
With eyes well-pleased along the statued hall ;
But, ere he left, he turned with saddened face,
And mused before the curtained pedestal.

And once a courtier asked him why he kept
The shadowed niche to fill his heart with dole ;
“ For absent friends,” the monarch said, and wept ;
“ There still must be one absent to the soul.”

And this is true of all the hearts that beat ;

Though days be soft and summer pathways fair,
Be sure, while joyous glances round us meet,
The curtained crypt and vacant plinth are there.

To-day we stand before our draped recess :

There is none absent — all we love are here ;
To-morrow's hands the opening curtains press,
And lo, the pallid pediment is bare !

The cold affection that plain duty breeds

May see its union severed, and approve ;
But when our bond is touched, it throbs and bleeds —
We pay no meed of duty, but of love.

As creeping tendrils shudder from the stone,

The vines of love avoid the frigid heart ;
The work men do is not their test alone,
The love they win is far the better chart.

They say the citron-tree will never thrive
Transplanted from the soil where it matured ;
Ah, would 't were so that men could only live
Through working on where they had love secured !

“ The People of the Book,” men called the Jews —
Our priests are truly “ People of the Word ;”
And he who serves the Master must not choose —
He renders feudal service to the Lord.

But we who love and lose will, like the king,
Still keep the alcove empty in the hall,
And hope, firm-hearted, that some day will bring
Our absent one to fill his pedestal.

*Soldier, why do you shrink from the hiss of the hungry
lead ?*

*The bullet that whizzed is past : the approaching ball
is dumb.*

*Stand straight ! you cannot shrink from Fate : let it
come !*

*A comrade in front may hear it whiz — when you are
dead.*

A SONG FOR THE SOLDIERS.

WHAT song is best for the soldiers?

Take no heed of the words, nor choose you
the style of the story ;

Let it burst out from the heart like a spring from the
womb of a mountain,

Natural, clear, resistless, leaping its way to the levels ;

Whether of love or hate or war or the pathos and pain
of affliction ;

Whether of manly pluck in the perilous hour, or that
which is higher,

And highest of all, the slowly bleeding sacrifice,

The giving of life and its joys for the sake of men
and freedom ; —

Any song for the soldier that will harmonize with the
life-throbs ;

For he has laved in the mystical sea by which men are
one ;

His pulse has thrilled into blinding tune with the vaster
anthems

Which God plays on the battle-fields when He sweeps
the strings of nations,

And the song of the earth-planet bursts on the silent
spheres,

Shot through like the cloud of Etna with flames of
heroic devotion,

And shaded with quivering lines from the mourning of
women and children !

Here is a song for the soldiers — a song of the Chey-
enne Indians,

Of men with soldierly hearts who walked with Death
as a comrade.

Hush ! Let the present fade ; let the distance die ; let
the last year stand :

We are far to the West, in Montana, on the desolate
plains of Montana ;

We ride with the cavalry troopers on the bloody trail
of the Cheyennes,

Forty braves of the tribe who have leaped from the
reservation

Down on the mining camps in their desecrated
valleys,

Down to their fathers' graves and the hunting-ground
of their people.

Chilled with the doom of Death they gaze on the
white men's changes :

Ruthless the brutal force that has crushed their homes
and their manhood,

And ruthless the hearts of the Cheyenne braves as
they swoop on the camps of the miners !

Back to the hills they dash, with reeking trophies
around them :

But swift on their trail the cavalry ride, and their
trumpets

Break on the ears of the braves with a threat of on-
coming vengeance.

At last they are bayed and barred — corralled in a
straight-walled valley, —

The Indians back to the cliffs with the shattered rocks
as a breastwork,

The soldiers in lined stockades across the mouth of
the valley.

Hungrily hiss the bullets, not wasted in random firing,
But every shot for a mark, — thrice their number of
soldiers

Raking the Cheyenne rocks with a pitiless rain of
missiles,

One to three in the firing, but every Cheyenne bullet
Tumbled a reckless trooper behind his fence in the
stockade.

“God ! they are brave !” cried the captain. “Seven
hours we’ve held them,
Three, ay, five to one, if you count their dead and
their wounded :
Damn them ! why don’t they yield for the sake of
their lives and their wounded ?”

But never a sign but flame and the hiss of the leaden
defiance
Comes from the Cheyenne braves, though their firing
slackens in vigor
To grow in fatal precision — grim as the cliff above
them
They fight their fight, and the valley is lined with death
from their rifles.

Cried the captain, "Men, we must charge !" and he
grieves for his boys and their foemen ;

"But show them a sign of quarter ;" and he swings
them a flag to tell them

That his side is willing to parley : the Indians riddle
the ensign,

And the captain groans in his heart as he gives the
order for charging.

Terrible getting ready of men who prepare for a death-
fight : —

Scabbards are thrown aside and belts unstrapped for
the striking,

Ominous outward signs of the deadlier inner pre-
paring

When the soul flings danger aside and the human heart
its mercy.

Out from the fatal earthworks, their eyes like fire in a
cavern,

With naked blades the troopers, and nerves wire-strung
for the onset,
When suddenly, up from the rocks, a sign at last from
the Cheyennes !

Two tall braves on the rocks — “ Re-form ! ” brays the
cavalry trumpet,
And grimly the soldiers return, reluctantly leaving the
conflict.

Still on the rocks two forms of bronze, as if prepared
for the stormers,
Then down to the field, and behold, they dash toward
the wondering troopers !

The soldiers stare at the charge, but no man laughs
at the foemen,
Instead of a sneer a tremor at many a mouth in sorrow.
On they come to their death, and, standing at fifty
paces,

They fire in the face of the squadron, and dash with
their knives to the death-grip !

Fifty rifles give flame, and the breasts of the heroes
are shattered ;

But falling, they plunge toward the fight, and their
knives sink deep in the meadow !

“ On to the rocks ! ” and the soldiers have done with
their feelings of mercy —

But never a foe to meet them nor a shot from the
deadly barrier.

First on the rocks the captain, with a cheer that died
as he gave it, —

A cheer that was half a groan and a cry of admiration.

Awed stood the troopers who followed, and lowered
their swords with their leader,

Homage of brave to the brave, saluting with souls and
weapons ;

There at their feet lay the foemen — every man dead
on his rifle —

The two who had charged the troops were the last
alive of the Cheyennes !

THE MUTINY OF THE CHAINS.

(PENAL COLONY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1857.)

THE sun rose o'er dark Fremantle,
And the Sentry stood on the wall ;
Above him, with white lines swinging,
The flag-staff, bare and tall :
The flag at its foot — the Mutiny Flag —
Was always fast to the line, —
For its sanguine field was a cry of fear,
And the Colony counted an hour a year
In the need of the blood-red sign.

The staff and the line, with its ruddy flash,
Like a threat or an evil-bode,
Were a monstrous whip with a crimson lash,
Fit sign for the penal code.

The Sentry leant on his rifle, and stood
By the mast, with a deep-drawn breath ;
A stern-browed man, but there heaved a sigh
For the sight that greeted his downward eye
In the prison-square beneath.

In yellow garb, in soldier lines,
One hundred men in chains ;
While the watchful warders, sword in hand,
With eyes suspicious keenly scanned
The links of the living lanes.

There, wary eyes met stony eyes,
And stony face met stone.
There was never a gleam of trust or truce ;
In the covert thought of an iron loose,
Grim warder and ward were one.

Why was it so, that there they stood, —
Stern driver and branded slave ?

Why rusted the gyve in the bondman's blood,
No hope for him but the grave?
Out of thousands there why was it so
That one hundred hearts must feel
The bitterest pang of the penal woe,
And the grind of a nation's heel?

Why, but for choice — the bondman's choice?
They balanced the gains and pains ;
They took their chance of the chains.
There spake in their hearts a hidden voice
Of the blinding joy of a freeman's burst
Through the great dim woods. Then the toil accurst ;
The scorching days and the nights in tears ·
The riveted rings for years and years ;
They weighed them all — they looked before
At the one and other, and spoke them o'er,
And they saw what the heart of man must see,
That the uttermost blessing is Liberty !

Ah, pity them, God ! they must always choose,
For the life to gain and the death to lose.
They dream of the woods and the mountain spring,
And they grasp the flower, to clutch the sting.

Even so : they are better than those who bend
Like beasts to the lash, and go on to the end
As a beast will go, with to-day for a life,
And to-morrow a blank. Offer peace and strife
To a man enslaved — let him vote for ease
And coward labor, and be content ;
Or let him go out in the front, as these,
With their eyes on the doom and the danger, went.
And take your choice — the man who remains
A self-willed serf, or the one who stains
His sudden hand with a drive for light
Through a bristling rank and a gloomy night.
This man for me — for his heart he 'll share
With a friend : with a foe, he 'll fight him fair.

And such as he are in every rank
Of the column that moves with a dismal clank
And a dead-march step toward the rock-bound place
Where the chain-gangs toil — o'er the beetling face
Of the cliff that roots in the Swan's deep tide :
Steep walls of granite on either side,
At the precipice' foot the river wide ;
Behind them in ranks the warders fall ;
And above them, the Sentry paces the wall.

Year in, year out, has the Sentry stood
On the wall at the foot of the mast.
He has turned from the toilers to watch the flood
Like his own slow life go past.
He has noted the Chains grow fat and lean ;
He has sighed for their empty spaces,
And thought of the cells where their end had been,
Where they lay with their poor dead faces,
With never a kiss, or prayer, or knell —
They were better at rest in the river ;

He thinks of the shadow that o'er them fell
From the mast with its whip-like quiver ;
He has seen it tipped with its crimson lash
When the mutiny-flood had risen
And swept like a sea with an awful swash
Through the squares and the vaulted prison.
His thoughts are afar with the woful day,
With the ranged dead men and the dying,
And slowly he treads till they pass away ——

Then a pause, and a start, and a scuffling sound,
And a glance beneath, at a battle-ground,
Where the lines are drawn, and the Chains are found
Their armèd guards defying !
A hush of death — and the Sentry stands
By the mast, with the halyards tight in his hands,
And the Mutiny Flag is flying !

Woe to the weak, to the mutineers !
The bolt of their death is driven ;

A mercy waits on all other tears,
But the Chains are never forgiven.
Woe to the rebels ! — their hands are bare,
Their manacled bodies helpless there ;
Their faces lit with a strange wild light,
As if they had fought and had won the fight !

No cry is uttered — upraised no hand ;
All stilled to a muscle's quiver ;
One line on the brink of the cliff they stand,
Their shadows flung down on the river.
The quarry wall is on either side,
The blood-red flag high o'er them ;
But the lurid light in their eyes defied
The gathering guards before them.
No parley is held when the Chains revolt :
Grimly silent they stand secure
On the outward lip of the embrasure ;
Waiting fierce-eyed for the fatal bolt.
A voice from the guard, in a monotone ;

A voice that was cold and hard as stone : —

“ Make ready ! Fire ! ”

O Christ, the cry

From the manacled men ! not fear to die,

Or whine for mercy ; rebelled they stood,

Well knowing the price of revolt was blood ;

Well knowing — but each one knew that he

Would sell his blood for his liberty !

Unwarned by a word, uncalled, unshriven,

They dare by a look — and the doom is given.

They raise their brows in the wild revolt,

And God's wrath flames in the fierce death-bolt ;

God's wrath ? — nay, man's ; God never smote

A rebel dead whose swelling throat

Was full with protest. Hear, then smite ;

God's justice weighs not shrieks the right.

“ Make ready ! Fire ! ”

Again outburst

The horror and shame for the deed accurst !

O, cry of the weak, as the hot blood calls
From the burning wound, and the stricken falls
With his face in the dust ; and the strong one stands,
With scornful lips and ensanguined hands ;
O, blood of the weak, unbought, unpriced,
Thy smoke is a piteous prayer to Christ !

They stand on the brink of the cliff — they bend
To the dead in their chains ; then rise, and send
To the murdering muzzles defiant eyes.

“ Make ready ! Fire ! ”

The smoke-clouds rise :
They are still on the face of the cliff — they bend
Once more to the dead — they whisper a word
To the hearts in the dust — then, undeterred,
They raise their faces, so grimly set,
Till the eyes of slayer and doomed have met.
O merciful God, let thy pity rain
Ere the hideous lightning leaps again !

They have sinned — they have erred — let the living
stand —

They have dared and rued — let thy loving hand
Be laid on those brows that bravely face

The death that shall wash them of all disgrace !

Be swift with pity — O, late, too late !

The tubes are levelled — the marksmen wait

For the word of doom — the spring is pressed

By the nervous finger — the sight is straight —

“ Make ready ! ” —

Why falters the dread command ?

Why stare as affrighted the armèd band ?

Why lower the rifles from shoulder to hip,

Why dies the word on the leader's lip,

While the voice that was hard grows husky deep,

And the face is a-tremble as if to weep ?

The Chains on the brink of the cliff are lined ;

The living are bowed o'er the dead — they rise

And they face the rifles with burning eyes ;

Then they bend again, and with one set mind
They raise the dead and the wounded raise
In their loving arms with words of praise
And tender grief for the torturing wounds.
One backward step with a burdened tread —
They bear toward the precipice wounded and dead —
Then they turned on the cliff to front the guard
With faces like men that have died in fight ;
Their brows were raised as if proud reward
Were theirs, and their eyes had a victor's light.

They spoke not a word, but stood sublime
In their sombre strength, and the watchers saw
That they smiled as they looked, and their words were
heard
As they spoke to the dying a loving word.

They were Men at last — they knew naught of crime ;
They were masters and makers of life and law.
They turned from the guard that quailed and shrank

From the gleaming eyes of the burdened rank ;
They turned on the cliff, and a sob was heard
As they looked far down on the darkened river ;
They raised their eyes to the sky — they grasped
The dead to their breasts, while the wounded clasped
The necks of the brothers who bore their weight —
Then they sprang from the cliff, as a horse will spring
For his life from a precipice — sprang to death
In silence and sternness — one deep breath,
As they plunged, of liberty, thrilled their souls,
And then — the Chains were at rest forever !



[illegible]

BOSTON COLLEGE



3 9031 01454336 7

O'Duffy 37952

BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

Books may be kept for two weeks and may be renewed for the same period, unless reserved.

Two cents a day is charged for each book kept overtime.

If you cannot find what you want, ask the Librarian who will be glad to help you.

The borrower is responsible for books drawn on his card and for all fines accruing on the same.



